THE ORIGINALITY OF IBN MAḌĀʾ'S LINGUISTIC IDEAS:
PRESCRIPTIVE RULES VERSUS METHODOLOGY
INSIDE *AL-RADD ʿALĀ AL-NUḤĀT*

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Abstract

Ibn Maḍāʾ represents the first scholar who overtly condemned the tradition of grammatical studies formulated in the eastern Mediterranean lands. However, his invective does not undermine the Arabic grammatical theory in its entirety but leaves the majority of its normative contents intact. Indeed, Ibn Maḍāʾ attacks a series of elements representative of the method adopted by Arab grammarians in dealing with such contents: the concept of government (*ʿamal*), the analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), the concealment of linguistic elements (*ʾiḍmār*), the secondary and tertiary causes (*ʿilal tawānin wa-tawālit*). The present paper analyses the effective originality of his invective, comparing it to some ideas expressed by Eastern grammarians, especially those belonging to the Kūfan tradition, showing the main points of analogy.

Résumé

Ibn Maḍāʾ représente le premier érudit qui a ouvertement condamné la tradition des études grammaticales formulées dans les pays de la Méditerranée orientale. Cependant, son invective ne sape pas la théorie grammaticale arabe dans sa totalité, mais laisse la majorité de ses contenus normatifs intacts. En effet, Ibn Maḍāʾ attaque une série d'éléments représentatifs de la méthode adoptée par les grammairiens arabes dans l'illustration de ces contenus : le concept de gouvernement (*ʿamal*), le raisonnement analogique (*qiyās*), l'ellipse d'éléments linguistiques (*ʾiḍmār*), les causes secondaires et tertiaires (*ʿilal tawānin wa-tawālit*). Le présent article analyse l'originalité réelle de son invective, en la comparant à certaines idées exprimées par les grammairiens orientaux, en particulier ceux appartenant à la tradition de Kūfa, et en montrant les principaux points d'analogie.

Keywords

Arabic grammatical tradition, Andalusian grammarians, refutation of Oriental grammarians, simplification of Arabic grammar, pedagogical grammars

Mots-clés

Tradition grammaticale arabe, grammairiens andalous, contestation des grammairiens orientaux, simplification de la grammaire arabe, grammaires pédagogiques

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Andalusian grammarian Ibn Maḍāʾ al-Qurṭubī (d. 592/1196) is the author of the most vehement and reasoned attack against the classic linguistic thought. His aim, illustrated in the book *al-Radd ʿalā al-nuḥāt* "The refutation of the

grammarians",[1] is to remove from grammar anything that is not needed and to denounce errors that are common to all grammarians. Ibn Maḍāʾ sees that the current grammatical system has become fused and blended with superfluous, unnecessary, useless elements, and lost its original simplicity and conciseness, thus becoming complicated and difficult to understand. Cleansing the grammatical discipline from the false statements made by his predecessors is the only way to offer learners a new simplified grammar, whose main purpose is preserving language from corruption and guiding people in the formulation of speech acts. The thrust of al-Qurṭubī's thesis is the theory of government (*naẓariyyat al-ʿāmil*), the backbone of Arabic grammar, and all the mechanisms that have arisen from its adoption. Ibn Maḍāʾ attributes to this theory the bulk of the problems, which Arabic grammar manifests.

Before proceeding with the discussion, one important consideration is necessary: the refutation of Ibn Maḍāʾ does not undermine the prescriptive rules (*ʿilal taʿlīmiyya*) of Arabic grammar but a series of methodological elements traditionally adopted by Arab grammarians in dealing with linguistic facts. These elements are: (i) the above-mentioned theory of government (*naẓariyyat al-ʿamal*), (ii) the analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), (iii) the assumption of implied elements inside the sentence (*ʾiḍmār*) and (iv) the search for secondary and tertiary causes (*ʿilal ṯawānin wa-ṯawāliṯ*). In refusing such elements, Ibn Maḍāʾ exclusively refers to that tradition of studies which was developed in Basran circles[2] and later became the mainstream.[3]

Given the nature of the elements attacked by the Andalusian grammarian, the aim of this paper is to show that the originality of Ibn Maḍāʾ's linguistic thought consists essentially in his didactic approach to Arabic grammar and, more

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1 As assumed by Wolfe (1990), it seems that *al-Radd* was not the original title of this work. Indeed, *al-Radd* contains elements of other two texts of Ibn Maḍāʾ that have not been preserved: *Tanzīh al-Qurʾān* and *al-Mušriq fī al-naḥw*. *Tanzīh* appears to be the original work that became *al-Radd* by the addition of parts of *al-Mušriq*.

2 In this regard, suffice it to mention the way Ibn Maḍāʾ concisely defines the theory of government. He states that Arab grammarians explain *naṣb*, *ǧarr* and *ǧazm* through the action of expressible operators; as for *rafʿ*, it is the result of both expressible and abstract operators (Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 76). Such a statement, however, does not take into account minor linguistic positions, like those developed in the Kūfan environment: indeed, Kūfan grammarians explain the *naṣb* showed by certain linguistic elements through the action of one particular abstract operator, namely *ṣarf* (Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 202, 206 and 442).

3 In the standard tradition, Arabic linguistic thinking is divided into three schools, the Baṣran, Kūfan and Baġdādian. The classical presentation of this model was written by the 6th/12th century grammarian Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, who represented Baṣra and Kūfa as historically real schools of grammatical theory. Ibn al-ʾAnbārī's characterization had an enduring impact on the conceptualization of Arabic linguistic thinking, with many Western and Arab linguists accepting it. Nonetheless, the historical reality of these schools was challenged by scholars like Gotthold Weil (1913) and Michael Carter (1973), who considered them a creation of the 4th/10th century grammarians (Owens 1990, p. 1-3).

specifically, in the method adopted during the illustration of linguistic facts. This method does not remain a mere proclaim but finds empirical application in three chapters of his work dedicated to problematic and obscure issues: the conflict in government (*tanāzuʿ*),[4] the verbal occupation (*ištiġāl*),[5] the causative *fa-* (*al-fāʾ al-sababiyya*) and the *wa-* of simultaneousness (*wāw al-maʿiyya*).[6] If we carefully consider the illustration of these chapters and the prescriptive rules they contain, with particular reference to the rules regarding words' function, declensional endings and sentences' structural composition, we will notice that Ibn Maḍāʾ does not abandon the classical grammatical system, adopting only in few cases positions traditionally regarded as heterodox. Finally, the present paper will discuss the effective originality of Ibn Maḍāʾ's method, through its comparison to some positions adopted in the past by Arab eastern grammarians, especially those belonging to Kūfan circles.

2 THE ORIGINALITY OF IBN MAḌĀʾ'S LINGUISTIC THOUGHT

If we take into consideration the prescriptive rules contained in the above-mentioned chapters of *al-Radd* (cf. § 1), we will notice that they coincide, in the majority of cases, with the rules elaborated by Ibn Maḍāʾ's eastern predecessors, particularly those belonging to the Baṣran circles. In this sense, we almost have the impression to read a classical treatise dated before the 4th/10th century, like Sībawayhi's (d. 180/796?) *Kitāb* or al-Zaǧǧāǧī's (d. 337/949) *Ǧumal*, cleansed, of course, from all the abstract and superfluous explanations. In order to demonstrate that, a list has been prepared, containing all the prescriptive rules that Ibn Maḍāʾ intends to provide students with (table 1). For each rule, the list reports the name of the Arab grammarian or the more general linguistic trend[7] to whom the author expressly traces it back or which has been possible to attribute to a specific grammarian/school thanks to the compared reading of other classical sources.

What emerges from table 1 is that the majority of the linguistic rules contained in the book are of Baṣran origin, most of them present in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*. The remaining rules represent isolated ideas expressed by grammarians of different backgrounds. Finally, a very small percentage represents Ibn Maḍāʾ's distinctive

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4 Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 94-102.

5 Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 103-122.

6 Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 123-129.

7 As it appears in table 1, the trends individuated in *al-Radd* are those developed by the Baṣran and Kūfan schools. However, it is worth mentioning that Ibn Maḍāʾ never makes use of these labels. He only refers to what had become the orthodox linguistic thought, using expressions like "they say" or "Arab grammarians maintain". Kūfan grammarians are never referred to as a school but individually mentioned (it is the case of al-Kisāʾī, d. 189/805, and al-Farrāʾ, d. 207/822).

TABLE 1

Prescriptive rules inside *al-Radd*

Chapter	Prescriptive rules	Grammarian/ grammatical trend with explicit reference inside al-radd	Grammarian / grammatical trend with no reference inside al-radd	References
Tanāzuʿ (p. 94-102)	Behavior of mono-transitive verbs: the shared constituent establishes a link with the second verb.	Baṣra		Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 79 Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 94
	Status of the subject pronoun contained in the first verb and referring to the shared constituent: it is deleted (*maḥḏūf*) from the sentence.	al-Kisāʾī		Sīrāfī, *Šarḥ*, I, p. 362 Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 96
	Behavior of di- and tri-transtive verbs: one cannot extend to them the status of mono-transitive verbs since there is no supporting example in the speech of the Arabs. Hence, their inclusion inside this chapter is not permissible.		al-Ǧarmī	Sīrāfī, *Šarḥ*, I, p. 361 Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 100
	Behavior of verbs of wonder: it is possible to extend to them the status of mono-transitive verbs.		Baṣra	Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 99
	Behavior of *ḥabbaḏā* "how lovely it would be", *niʿma* "what a perfect …", *biʾsa* "what an evil …" and *ʿasā* "it might be": one cannot extend to them the status of mono-transitive verbs.		Baṣra	Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 99

Table 1 (continued).

Chapter	Prescriptive rules	Grammarian/ grammatical trend with explicit reference inside al-radd	Grammarian / grammatical trend with no reference inside al-radd	References
Tanāzuʿ (continued)	In expressions of wonder, the term *ʾaḥsana* is a noun, not a verb.		Kūfa	Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 105
	Behavior of *kāna* and its sisters in case of *tanāzuʿ*: the analogical reasoning can be extended to the verb *kāna* only, not to its sisters.	(Ibn Maḍāʾ)		
Ištiġāl (p. 103-122)	Affirmative sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the nominative case. The accusative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 82-83
	Negative sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the accusative case. The nominative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 145
	Hypothetical sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the accusative case. The nominative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 134
	Imperative sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the accusative case. The nominative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 137

Table 1 (continued).

Chapter	Prescriptive rules	Grammarian/ grammatical trend with explicit reference inside al-radd	Grammarian / grammatical trend with no reference inside al-radd	References
Ištiġāl (continued)	Prohibitive sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the accusative case. The nominative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 137
	Interrogative sentences: the object moved to the sentence initial position preferably exhibits the accusative case.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 101-102
	Expressions of incitement: the object moved to the sentence initial position can only exhibit the accusative case.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 98
	Expressions of wonder: the object moved to the sentence initial position can only exhibit the nominative case.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 72-73 Ibn Mālik, *Šarḥ al-Tashīl*, II, p. 137
	Linguistic analysis of the Qurʾanic verses *al-sāriqu wa-l-sāriqatu* […] and *al-zāniyatu wa-l-zānī* […] (Kor 5, 38): the terms at the sentence initial position function as inchoatives and the following verbs are their predicates.		al-Farrāʾ/ al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898)	Sīrāfī, *Šarḥ*, I, p. 499

Table 1 (continued).

Chapter	Prescriptive rules	Grammarian/ grammatical trend with explicit reference *inside* al-radd	Grammarian / grammatical trend with no reference *inside* al-radd	References
Ištiġāl (continued)	Two questions of al-ʾAḫfaš al- ʾAwsaṭ (d. 215/830): the object moved to the sentence initial position can agree in the grammatical case with the dependent or the independent pronoun.	(Ibn Maḍāʾ)		
	In the sentence ʾa-ʾanta ʿAbdu Allāhi ḍarabta-hu, the term ʿAbdu Allāhi preferably exhibits the nominative case.	Sībawayhi		Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 104
	In sentences like ḍarabtu Zaydan wa-ʿAmran ʾakramtu-hu, the term ʿAmr preferably exhibits the accusative case. The nominative is, however, permissible.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 88-89
	In sentences like Zaydan ʾakramtu-hu wa-ʿAbda Allāhi laqītu-hu, the term ʿAbda Allāhi can exhibit both the nominative and the accusative case.	Sībawayhi		Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, I, p. 91
	In sentences like Zaydan ʾakramtu-hu wa-ʿAbda Allāhi laqītu-hu, one cannot coordinate the term ʿAbda Allāhi to the verbal sentence ʾakramtu-hu.	al-ʾAḫfaš / al-Mubarrad		Ibn Wallād, *Intiṣār*, p. 61 Sīrāfī, *Šarḥ*, I, p. 390

Table 1 (continued).

Chapter	Prescriptive rules	Grammarian/ grammatical trend with explicit reference inside al-radd	Grammarian / grammatical trend with no reference inside al-radd	References
The particles *fa-* and *wa-* (p. 123-129)	The verb after the particle *fāʾ* is in the subjunctive mood whenever it expresses a resulting clause of a preceding utterance conveying not the value of a statement.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, III, p. 28-38
	The verb after the particle *wa-* is in the subjunctive mood whenever this latter conveys the meaning of *maʿa* and is not preceded by a statement.		Sībawayhi	Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, III, p. 41-46

ideas, which apparently cannot be traced back to any of his predecessors.[8] The same procedure has been applied to the author's innovative method: the basic principles he adopts in the illustration of linguistic facts have been identified and compared to specific positions expressed by some of his predecessors (table 2). The implications of such a work will be discussed at length in the following paragraphs. However, suffice it to say that, although Ibn Maḍāʾ represents the first scholar who overtly refuses the traditional analysis offered by grammarians and systematically applies innovative methodological principles, most of these principles have undoubtedly already been followed, even if not systematically, by some predecessors, especially those belonging to Kūfan circles. Moreover, Ibn Maḍāʾ does not make any reference to them and presents these ideas as the result of a personal critical reflection. Only in the case of Ibn Ǧinnī (d. 392/1002) he openly recognizes his merit in attributing word's declensional vowels to the speaker's action, not to linguistic operators.[9]

3 Methodological elements in Ibn Maḍāʾ's linguistic thinking

If we consider table 2, we can individuate three main guidelines Ibn Maḍāʾ adopts in the illustration of classical chapters of Arabic grammar, namely (i) the priority of attested data (samāʿ) over analogical reasoning (qiyās); (ii) the refutation of implied elements (ʾiḍmār) inside the sentence; (iii) the invalidity of secondary and tertiary causes (ʿilal ṯawānin wa-ṯawāliṯ). In the following subparagraphs, these guidelines will be compared to some linguistic positions adopted by Kūfan grammarians, in order to show the strict analogy that exists with them and, hence, to put in discussion the effective originality of Ibn Maḍāʾ's linguistic thought.

3.1 The priority of attested data (samāʿ) over analogical reasoning (qiyās)

In accordance with his Ẓāhirite tendencies, Ibn Maḍāʾ extends to the grammatical discipline the principles of this juridical school and refuses any personal interpretation (raʾy) *that, starting from wrong premises, inevitably leads to false conclusions. With respect to the linguistic text, this means an extreme attention to the exact form in which it has been produced or transmitted: the author invites grammarians not to go beyond the concrete text, which expresses in itself a complete meaning without the need of reconstructing implicit elements. Such an attitude has notably been a distinctive characteristic of the Kūfan linguistic environment, who based their rules on evidence found in classical texts. Kūfan scholars were absorbed in collecting linguistic material and transmitting it in its original form, without trying to find justifications for evident deviations from the*

8 In our investigation of other classical sources, none of these positions has been found.
9 Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 77.

Table 2
Methodological elements inside *al-Radd*

Methodological elements	Similar opinions expressed by:	References
The declensional vowels are induced by the speaker himself not by other linguistic elements.	Ibn Ǧinnī	Ibn Ǧinnī, *Ḫaṣāʾiṣ*, I, p. 109 Ibn Maḍāʾ, *Radd*, p. 77
Priority of *samāʿ* over *qiyās*.	Kūfa	
Absence of an implicit operator in sentences characterized by *ištiġāl*: the fronted object gets in relationship with the following verb.	Kūfa	Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 77
Absence of an implicit operator before the vocative complement.	(Ibn Maḍāʾ)	
Absence of an implicit *ʾan* after the particles *fa-* and *wa-*: the subjunctive mood after them depends on the difference in the syntactic and semantic value between the two coordinated verbs.	Kūfa (al-Farrāʾ)	Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 442 and 445
Absence of an implicit operator in relation to prepositional phrases (*ǧārr wa-maǧrūr*).	Kūfa	Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 202
Absence of a concealed pronoun in adjectival derivatives.	(Ibn Maḍāʾ)	
Absence of a concealed pronoun in verbs (third person masculine singular).	Kūfa (al-Kisāʾī)	Sīrāfī, *Šarḥ*, I, p. 362 Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 96
Invalidity of secondary and tertiary causes in the specific case of (i) diptotes and (ii) imperfect verbs.	(i) al-Suhaylī (d. 581/1185) (ii) Kūfa	(i) Suhaylī, *ʾAmālī*, p. 20 (ii) Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, *ʾInṣāf*, p. 434

rules.[10] However, it should be noted that, whilst Kūfan grammarians traditionally resorted to the principal of samāʿ in order to prove the validity of linguistic data, Ibn Maḍāʾ uses the attested material in a more negative way: indeed, his aim is to

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10 As Weil illustrates in his introduction to his edition of *al-ʾInṣāf* (Weil 1913, p. 3-37), the method adopted by Baṣran grammarians in dealing with linguistic facts was founded on analogical reasoning (*qiyās*): indeed, their main purpose was to classify empiric data into logic categories and to individuate the universal laws determining their behavior, thus reducing Arabic to the least number of rules. On the contrary, Kūfan grammarians were more attentive to the variety of attested data (*samāʿ*) and tried to preserve and respect the originality of each way of expression.

forbid the formulation of innovative expressions to which no transmitted example can be compared. In a wider sense, the significant attention Ibn Maḍāʾ pays to samāʿ *can be considered as one of the factors that led him to deny the existence of underlying levels of representation: only what clearly appears can be accepted as true and certain. Considering this, Ibn Maḍāʾ refuses the application of analogical reasoning whenever it cannot be supported by attested data. This position appears in several passages of his work; we will quote some of the most relevant among them, particularly those contained in the chapter of* tanāzuʿ*:*

> It is more appropriate to defer [judgement] to what is heard from the Arabs with respects to words other than kāna *(wa-l-ʾazhar ʾan yūqafa fī-mā ʿadā kāna ʿalā al-samāʿ min al-ʿarab, Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 100).*

In this particular passage Ibn Maḍāʾ analyses all the possible analogical extensions of tanāzuʿ. *The author wonders whether or not all verbs can be included in this chapter. It is the case, for example, of* kāna *and its sisters. Ibn Maḍāʾ comes to the conclusion that analogical reasoning can be applied only to* kāna *since "it can be used beyond its proper domain and its predicate can be pronominalized" (*li-ʾanna kāna uttusiʿa[11] fī-hā wa-ʾuḍmira ḫabaru-hā, Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 100). *As for its sisters, one must follow what it has been heard from the Arabs.*

Likewise, Ibn Maḍāʾ comes to the same conclusion with respect to the inclusion of di- and tri-transitive verbs inside this chapter:

> My view of this and similar examples is that they are not permissible because there is nothing like it in the speech of the Arabs. Making di- and tri-transitive verbs analogous to mono-transitive verbs is a far-fetched analogy due to the complexity related to the occurrence of numerous (suffixed) pronouns and to the operations of preponing and postponing (wa-raʾy-ī fī hāḏā al-masʾala wa-mā šākala-hā ʾanna-hā lā taǧūzu li-ʾanna-hu lam yaʾti la-hā naẓīr fī kalām al-ʿarab wa-qiyāsu-hā ʿalā al-ʾafʿāl al-dālla ʿalā mafʿūl bi-hi wāḥid qiyās baʿīd li-mā fī-hi min al-ʾiškāl bi-kaṯra al-ḍamāʾir wa-l-taʾḫīr wa-l-taqdīm, *Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 98-99).*

As shown in table 2, such specific view of di- and tri-transitive verbs is not an innovation of our author but was already adopted by the grammarian al-Ǧarmī (d. 225/839). Similarly to Ibn Maḍāʾ, al-Ǧarmī forbids the extension of analogical reasoning to these verbs because of the lack of attested examples in the speech of the Arabs.[12]

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11 As pointed out by Versteegh (1990, p. 283), the term *ittisāʿ* is used, in the early period of grammar, to denote the process by which a word is placed beyond its proper boundaries, as an extension of its normal domain.

12 Suyūṭī, *Hamʿ*, III, p. 100.

Regarding those governed words that have been almost ignored by grammarians in the tanāzuʿ *chapter, like absolute objects, accusatives of time and place, circumstantial adverbs, adverbs of purpose, adverbs of accompaniment and adverbs of specification, Ibn Maḍāʾ states the following:*

> The best thing is not to extend to these elements what has been observed in the collected data, unless one can adduce for them attested examples, as in the case of [collected data] (wa-l-ʾaẓhar ʾallā yuqāsa šayʾ min hāḏihi ʿalā al-masmūʿ ʾillā ʾan yusmaʿa fī hāḏihi ka-mā sumiʿa fī tilka, *Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 101).*

3.2 The refutation of implied elements inside the sentence

A particular mechanism linked to the theory of government is the assumption of a sentence virtual grammatical construction (taqdīr). *Starting from a concrete linguistic expression, the grammarian, most of the times, reconstructs an underlying level of representation in which he makes all the missing elements appear, in order to keep up the rules of the grammar and the harmony of the language. This is, according to Ibn Maḍāʾ, the very cause of degeneration and complication of the grammatical theories.*

a) The first category of understood elements he contests has to do with the grammarians' reinterpretation of sentences in which prepositional phrases (ǧārr wa-maǧrūr) *occur as (i) predicates (*ḫabar), *(ii) part of a relative clause (*ṣila), *(iii) adjectives (*ṣifa) *and (iv) part of a circumstantial clause (*ḥāl). *For each of these occurrences, the grammarians assume the existence of a deletion, namely a word to which these linguistic units are attached (*mutaʿalliqāt). *According to Ibn Maḍāʾ, sentences containing prepositional phrases in the above mentioned positions are complete sentences for which there is no need for any reinterpretation (*taʾwīl); *such reinterpretations are the creation of the grammarians and therefore belong to them.*

Considering this, one can assume that Ibn Maḍāʾ applies to the linguistic unit formed by the preposition and the following noun the conclusions reached by al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) and his followers with regard to the category of accusatives of time and place (ẓurūf) *serving as predicates.*[13] *According to them, whenever these elements have a predicative function, the accusative case they show must be explained by their logic-semantic divergence (*ṣarf or ḫilāf) *with respect to the*

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13 Ibn Maḍāʾ does not make a real distinction between ẓurūf (accusatives of space and time) and ḥurūf (prepositions), although the examples he adduces exclusively belong to the second category. He only refers to the class of maǧrūrāt, namely those nouns in the genitive case following both ẓurūf and ḥurūf. This in order to avoid superfluous classifications that are not indispensable for pedagogical purposes. The aim of Ibn Maḍāʾ is to preserve similar constructions from the speculations of the grammarians: there is no need of a sentence virtual grammatical construction since the concrete expression is complete in itself and conveys a complete meaning.

subject, not by the action of an implicit governor.[14] *Since there is no need to postulate an underlying* ʿāmil*, the predicate of the sentence must be individuated in these accusatives themselves.*[15] *Although Ibn Maḍāʾ comes to the same conclusions of his Kūfan predecessors, he presents them as the result of a personal critical reflection:*

> Without doubt, this is a complete sentence consisting of two nouns indicating two meanings with a relationship between the two indicated by the preposition in*. There is no need for us to go beyond that (*wa-lā šakk ʾanna hāḏā kulla-hu kalām tāmm murakkab min ismayn dāllayn ʿalā maʿnayayn bayna-humā nisba wa-tilka al-nisba dallat ʿalay-hā fī wa-lā ḥāǧa bi-nā ʾilā ġayr ḏālika, *Ibn Maḍāʾ,* Radd, *p. 87).*

b) The second group of underlying words contested by Ibn Maḍāʾ consists in those operators which are responsible for the accusative case showed by fronted objects. In sentences like Zaydan ʾakramtu-hu *"Zayd-ACC, I honored him"*, Arab grammarians consider the verb ʾakramtu *to be distracted (*ištaġala*) from the preponed object* Zaydan *by the resumptive pronoun* -hu*: this means that the verb is "occupied" by this latter in his activity of case assigning. Therefore, they justify the occurrence of the accusative case in the fronted object by virtue of an implicit verb at the sentence initial position. Once again, this interpretation is strictly linked to the theory of government, particularly to the rule that stipulates that every case ending must be caused by a governing word, whether such a word is explicit or implicit.*

According to Ibn Maḍāʾ, in the above-mentioned example there is no implicit governor in front of the term in the accusative. Thus, the case this latter shows must be explained by virtue of the typology of the sentence. Ibn Maḍāʾ distinguishes between two types of sentences, one in which the verb is assertive, and another in which it is not. In the first group, he includes affirmative, negative and conditional sentences. In the second one, imperative, prohibitive, interrogative sentences, as well as expressions of incitement and wonder. For each typology, the Andalusian author illustrates the grammatical case that the fronted object should preferably exhibit. His main purpose and what he considers to be the ultimate purpose of grammar is guiding the speaker to the formulation of correct linguistic expressions, that is providing him with prescriptive not speculative rules. In the specific case of

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14 Carter 1973. In another article of his, Carter (1972) illustrates how this position was also held by Sībawayhi, who never attributes the dependent form of the ẓurūf to any verbal operator but explains their accusative case due to the fact that the ẓurūf are not identical with what precedes them. In addition, the 8th/14th century grammarian Ibn Hišām al-ʾAnṣārī (d. 761/1360) refers to us that the same view was shared by Ibn Ṭāhir (d. 580/1184) and Ibn Ḥarūf (d. 609/1212) (Ibn Hišām, Muġnī, II, p. 499).

15 Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, ʾInṣāf, p. 202.

the constructions characterized by ištiġāl, *these rules regard the grammatical case of the fronted object; all the other aspects upon which his predecessors had long speculated have no utility in the process of language learning.*

This view is again not far from the position shared by Kūfan grammarians, who refuse any implicit reconstruction in the concerned expressions: according to them, there is no underlying operator and the term at the beginning of the sentence must be interpreted as the object of the following verb. Ibn al-ʾAnbārī (d. 577/1181) clearly refers to this regard:

> Kūfan grammarians maintain that in the sentence 'Zayd-ACC, I hit him' [the word Zayd] is in the accusative because of the verb exhibiting the pronoun -hu *(ḏahaba al-kūfiyyūn ʾilā ʾanna qawla-hu zaydan ḍarabtu-hu manṣūb bi-l-fiʿl al-wāqiʿ ʿalā al-hāʾ, Ibn al-ʾAnbārī, ʾInṣāf, p. 77).*

c) The third category of implied elements, whose invalidity is extensively proven by Ibn Maḍāʾ, concerns the particles fa- *and* wa- *followed by the subjunctive mood. In such cases, grammarians traditionally postulate the presence of a virtual* ʾan *to explain the occurrence of the* naṣb. *Once again, such interpretation is strictly linked to the theory of government and, in particular, to the principle that stipulates that only specialized particles can govern grammatical cases.*[16] *In the first part of his work, the Andalusian author argues against such an interpretation, stating the following:*

> They render the verbs which occur after these particles in the subjunctive mood by the particle ʾan. *They equate* ʾan *plus the verb with the verbal noun. They change the verbs occurring before these particles into verbal nouns, and they conjoin verbal nouns to verbal nouns with these particles. When all of this is done, the meaning of the first utterance is no longer preserved (*yanṣibūna al-ʾafʿāl al-wāqiʿa baʿda hāḏihi al-ḥurūf bi-ʾan wa-yuqaddirūna ʾan maʿa al-fiʿl bi-l-maṣdar wa-yaṣrifūna al-ʾafʿāl al-wāqiʿa qabla hāḏihi al-ḥurūf ʾilā maṣādiri-hā wa-yaʿṭifūna al-maṣādir ʿalā al-maṣādir bi-hāḏihi al-ḥurūf wa-ʾiḏā faʿalū ḏālika kulla-hu lam yarid maʿnā al-lafẓ al-ʾawwal, Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 80).*

This assertion becomes more evident when Ibn Maḍāʾ illustrates the specific case of fa- *in negative sentences, where it conveys two different meanings:*

> Don't you see that the sentence 'you do not come to us and you speak to us' has two meanings? One of them is 'you do not come to us, so how can you speak to us?', which is to say that the act of speaking must be accompanied by the act of coming. If there is no coming, there can be no speaking. […] The other meaning is 'you do not come to us speaking', that is, you come to us but you do not speak. The grammarians consider the two interpretations to be equivalent to 'there is no coming and speaking from you'. This utterance renders neither of the two meanings (ʾa-lā tarā ʾanna-ka ʾiḏa qulta mā taʾtī-nā

16 Baalbaki 2008, p. 209-215.

> fa-tuḥaddiṯa-nā[17] kāna la-hā maʿnayān ʾaḥadu-humā mā taʾtī-nā fa-kayfa
> tuḥaddiṯu-nā ʾay ʾanna al-ḥadīṯ lā yakūnu ʾillā maʿa al-ʾityān wa-ʾiḏā lam
> yakun al-ʾityān lam yakun al-ḥadīṯ […] wa-l-waǧh al-ʾāḫar mā taʾtī-nā
> muḥaddiṯan ʾay ʾanna-ka taʾtī wa-lā tuḥaddiṯu wa-hum yuqaddirūna al-
> waǧhayn mā yakūnu min-ka ʾityān fa-ḥadīṯ wa-hāḏā al-lafẓ lā yuʿṭī maʿnā
> min hāḏayn al-maʿnayayn, *Ibn Maḍāʾ,* Radd*, p. 80).*

According to Ibn Maḍāʾ, the representation offered by grammarians ("there is no
coming and speaking from you") is false since it does not convey both meanings of
the initial sentence: mā taʾtī-nā fa-tuḥaddiṯa-nā. *After proving the inconsistency of
grammarians' arguments, he goes on illustrating this chapter without resorting to
the concept of government nor providing a virtual representation of the sentence.
He essentially wants to give non-speculative didactic prescriptions about the cases
when* fa- *and* wa- *are followed by the subjunctive mood. The general rule he lays
down takes into account the typology of the clause preceding these particles on the
one hand; on the other hand, he draws attention to the value of the second verb,
since this latter has a different meaning compared to the preceding one, namely
that of a resulting action for* fa- *and simultaneousness for* wa-. *In the section
dedicated to the particle* fa- *he states:*

> The verb following fa- *exhibits the subjunctive mood whenever it represents the
> result clause for any of the following clauses: imperative, prohibitive,
> interrogative, negative, polite proposal, optative, incitive and supplicative
> (*al-fāʾ intaṣaba baʿda-hā al-fiʿl ʾiḏā kāna ǧawāban li-ʾaḥad ṯamāniyat ʾašyāʾ al-
> ʾamr wa-l-nahy wa-l-istifhām wa-l-nafy wa-l-ʿarḍ wa-l-tamannī wa-l-taḥḍīḍ wa-
> l-duʿāʾ, *Ibn Maḍāʾ,* Radd*, p. 123).*

For each type of sentence, he adduces concrete examples taken from the Qurʾan,
old poetry and Arab's speech. Thus, all the analyzed expressions gain an
undiscussed value for being attested in the Tradition, not for speculative reasons.

As for the semantic value conveyed by the second verb, Ibn Maḍāʾ explicitly
makes reference of it in the passage dedicated to the ʿaṭf *phenomenon.[18] Whenever
this last occurs, both clauses must be of the same kind, with the verbs contained in
them exhibiting the same modal vowel. Ibn Maḍāʾ states in this regard:*

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17 It is worth to highlight here the occurrence of the particle *mā* in front of the present tense, for
two reasons. On the one hand, imperfect verbs are usually preceded by the negative particle *lā*;
however, *mā* can also occur in front of them whenever they denote an absolute present
(Wright 1974 [1896-1898], I, p. 287). On the other hand, the sentence *mā taʾtī-nā fa-tuḥaddiṯa-
nā* appears in other classic sources with some variants: whilst it remains unchanged
in Zaǧǧāǧī (*Ǧumal*, p. 193), Sībawayhi mentions it with the particle *lā* instead of *mā*
(Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, III, p. 27).

18 Ibn Maḍāʾ uses the term ʿaṭf "adjunction" instead of the more common ʾišrāk "partnership"
(on the terminology related to the concerned phenomenon see Sadan 2012, p. 307-310). As
the term itself indicates, ʿaṭf designates a "partnership" between two elements linked by a
conjunction with respect to the ʿāmil which affects these two elements and the syntactic
position which they both occupy.

> Concerning the instances where the verb after fa- *is subjunctive, in some cases*
> *adjunction (*ʿaṭf*) is permitted whereupon the inflection of the second verb will be*
> *identical to that of the first verb which precedes* fa- *and the meaning of the first*
> *will be not in conflict with that of the second verb (*wa-hāḏihi al-mawāḍiʿ al-latī
> yunṣabu fī-hā mā baʿda al-fāʾ min-hā mā yaǧūzu fī-hā al-ʿaṭf wa-yakūnu ʾiʿrāb
> al-fiʿl al-ṯānī ka-ʾiʿrāb al-fiʿl al-ʾawwal al-laḏī qabla al-fāʾ wa-yakūnu maʿnā-hu
> ġayr muḫālif li-maʿnā-hu, *Ibn Maḍāʾ,* Radd, *p. 123).*

In this passage Ibn Maḍāʾ refers to an identity with respect to the meaning
(maʿnā*) expressed by the two imperfect verbs in case of adjunction (*ʿaṭf*) and their*
agreement in the inflectional vowel. Consequently, the occurring of the subjunctive
mood in the second verb must be explained by virtue of the disagreement in
meaning between the two verbs. According to Ibn Maḍāʾ, Arab do not render the
verb in subjunctive mood because of the presence of an omitted ʾan*; on the*
contrary, they resort to it in order to express a different meaning that no one would
have expected in case of other inflectional vowels like ḍamma *of indicative for*
example.

Such a statement inevitably reminds us the Kūfan principle of ṣarf *or* ḫilāf *that,*
in the specific case of the causative fa- *and the* wa- *of simultaneousness, justifies the*
subjunctive mood of the verb by virtue of the different value expressed. The
opposition between the values of the first and the second verb is reflected in their
different moods: indeed, the subjunctive indicates the distinctive semantic
relationships of consequence or simultaneousness, which the indicative mood does
not convey. This analogy has been extensively highlighted by the scholar ʾAḥmad
Makkī al-ʾAnṣārī, *the author of a dissertation on al-Farrāʾ.*[19] *He points out that Ibn*
Maḍāʾ *was preceded in several of his views by al-Farrāʾ, the most prominent*
exponent of the Kūfan linguistic school according to him, and, in this sense, he is
guilty of plagiarism for taking his ideas and espousing them as his own. Al-ʾAnṣārī
explains this attitude, arguing that Ibn Maḍāʾ did not wish to be accused of
imitation nor allow others to see his indebtedness to ideas, which had originated in
the Mašriq.

Yet, one could raise an objection against al-ʾAnṣārī's thesis: on the one hand, it is
true that al-Farrāʾ in particular and the Kūfans in general were the first grammarians
who resorted to the principle of divergence (ṣarf*) in order to explain the subjunctive*
mood of these verbs. On the other hand, we must carefully analyze the real meaning
of this concept inside the Kūfan circles, since it seems to be still connected with the
theory of government. In this regard, we hereby quote the definition of ṣarf *given by*
al-Farrāʾ:

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19 ʾAnṣārī 1964.

> Ṣarf *is when the two verbs are connected by* wa-, *ṯumma*, fa- *or* ʾaw-. *At the beginning [of the first clause], there is a negative or interrogative particle and then you see that is impossible to repeat this negative or interrogative particle in the second clause as well (*wa-l-ṣarf ʾan yağtamiʿa al-fiʿlān bi-l-wāw ʾaw ṯumma ʾaw al-fā ʾaw ʾaw wa-fī ʾawwali-hi ğaḥd ʾaw istifhām ṯumma tarā ḏālika al-ğaḥd ʾaw al-istifhām mumtaniʿan ʾan yukarrara fī al-ʿaṭf, *Farrāʾ,* Maʿānī al-Qurʾān, *I, p. 235-236).*

The ṣarf *phenomenon represents a structural semantic discontinuity, which makes impossible to repeat in the second clause that element (*ḥādiṯa*)[20] which syntactically affects the first clause:*

> What is ṣarf? *It is when you bring* wa- *connected to a [preceding] utterance, which is introduced by an element with a syntactic effect that is not appropriate to repeat for the utterance to which it is connected [following* wa-*]. When this is so, this is* ṣarf *(*wa-mā al-ṣarf qulta ʾan taʾtiya bi-l-wāw maʿṭūfa ʿalā kalām fī ʾawwali-hi ḥādiṯa lā tastaqīmu ʾiʿādatu-hā ʿalā mā ʿuṭifa ʿalay-hā fa-ʾiḏā kāna ka-ḏālika fa-huwa al-ṣarf, *Farrāʾ,* Maʿānī al-Qurʾān, *I, p. 33-34).*

3.3 The invalidity of secondary and tertiary causes

Ibn Maḍāʾ rejects the use of secondary and tertiary causes[21] in the linguistic analysis: according to him, the illustration of primary causes is the only permissible level of investigation since they represent grammatical rules of an undiscussable value, empirically laid down and necessary for the correct speaking. Secondary and tertiary causes are an invention of grammarians[22] and they are not necessary for the language learning and the correct pronunciation. As an example of the invalidity of these causes, Ibn Maḍāʾ adduces the case of the imperfect verb: Arab grammarians explain the occurrence of declensional vowels in this last by virtue of its resemblance to the category of nouns. According to Ibn Maḍāʾ, such analogy contains an evident methodological error: indeed, the process of qiyās *implies the comparison of two elements only if the cause (*ʿilla*) which makes possible the comparison is contained in both of them. On the contrary, grammarians state that what causes* ʾiʿrāb *in nouns, namely the necessity to distinguish among all the different syntactic functions they can serve in a sentence, is absent from imperfect verbs. Ibn Maḍāʾ shows how this cause is present in the imperfect verb as well since it, similarly to nouns, can express different meanings:*

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20 The term ḥādiṯa denotes a linguistic element with a specific syntactic action inside the sentence (Kinberg 1995).
21 Also known as ʿilal qiyāsiyya and ʿilal ğadaliyya (Zağğāğī, ʾĪḍāḥ, p. 64-66; Versteegh 1995).
22 Only few of these causes are evident according to Ibn Maḍāʾ: however, their utility in the process of language learning is questionable (Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 132).

> Just as nouns have various usages, so also the verbs have different usages. They may be negative, affirmative, negative imperative, affirmative imperative, expressing a condition and the result of that condition, assertive and interrogative. Hence, their need for inflection is like the need of the nouns [for declension] (*wa-ka-mā ʾanna li-l-ʾasmāʾ ʾaḥwālan muḫtalifa fa-ka-ḏālika li-l-ʾafʿāl ʾaḥwāl muḫtalifa takūnu manfiyya wa-mūǧiba wa-manhiyyan ʿan-hā wa-maʾmūran bi-hā wa-šurūṭan wa-mašrūṭa wa-muḫbaran bi-hā wa-mustafhaman ʿan-hā fa-ḫāǧatu-hā ʾilā al-ʾiʿrāb ka-ḫāǧat al-ʾasmāʾ, Ibn Maḍāʾ, Radd, p. 134).*

In this regard, Ibn Maḍāʾ comes to the conclusion that ʾiʿrāb *is an intrinsic property of verbs as it is in nouns. A similar view is extensively analyzed by Ibn al-ʾAnbārī in his* ʾInṣāf*, where the author attributes it to Kūfan grammarians:*

> Baṣran and Kūfan grammarians agree on the fact that imperfect verbs can receive ʾiʿrāb. *However, they disagree on the cause of it. Kūfan grammarians say that it happens because imperfect verbs can express different meanings and indicate long periods of time* (ʾaǧmaʿa al-kūfiyyūn wa-l-baṣriyyūn ʿalā ʾanna al-ʾafʿāl al-muḍāriʿa muʿraba wa-ḫtalafū fī ʿillat ʾiʿrābi-hā fa-ḏahaba al-kūfiyyūn ʾilā ʾanna-hā ʾinna-mā ʾuʿribat li-ʾanna-hu daḫala-hā al-maʿānī al-muḫtalifa wa-l-ʾawqāt al-ṭawīla, *Ibn al-ʾAnbārī,* ʾInṣāf, *p. 434).*

4 CONCLUSIONS

The refutation of Ibn Maḍāʾ represents undoubtedly a novel approach in the history of the Arabic Linguistic Tradition that no one before him had ever adopted with such a courage and tenacity. However, it is important to highlight that his refutation does not undermine the Arabic grammar in its entirety; on the contrary, it preserves almost all its normative contents as they have been elaborated in the eastern Mediterranean lands, especially in the Baṣran circles. What Ibn Maḍāʾ aims at abolishing is the method adopted by Arab grammarians in dealing with such contents and, consequently, all the procedures and instruments borrowed by other disciplines, like philosophy and jurisprudence, employed in the illustrations of linguistic facts. Once he has proven the invalidity of the traditional analysis offered by grammarians, he puts his teachings into practice and shows how to deal with grammatical facts through a new simplified perspective, with pedagogical non-speculative purposes. His criticism is thus both destructive and constructive at the same time, since he offers a real alternative to the object of his attacks. However, as it has been shown in the previous paragraphs, it is undeniable that most of the guidelines of this new method show analogies with the illustration offered by some predecessors, particularly those belonging to the Kūfan environment.

What Ibn Maḍāʾ has in common with Kūfan grammarians is essentially the intention not to search for implicit linguistic elements inside the sentence and to pay attention only to the utterance's literal form. Such an analogy, together with the

absence of any reference to Kūfan grammarians in this respect, has led the author al-ʾAnṣārī to accuse Ibn Maḍāʾ of plagiarism (cf. § 3.2), and to identify in al-Farrāʾ the real pioneer of the simplification of Arabic grammar.

Yet, although al-Farrāʾ and more in general Kūfan grammarians had significantly preserved the linguistic data in comparison with their Baṣran colleagues, the theory of government remains an important part of their grammatical system. Suffice it to mention the concept of ṣarf: *although it attests the priority given to the semantic domain, al-Farrāʾ explains it through the categories of* ʿāmil *and* maʿmūl *(cf. § 3.2). The same thing is true for the constructions characterized by* ištiġāl: *even if Kūfan grammarians do not reconstruct an implicit* ʿāmil, *nonetheless they do not abandon their search for an operator and individuate it in the explicit verb with a resumptive pronoun (cf. § 3.2).*

Ibn Maḍāʾ is thus the first grammarian who systematically abandons the concepts of ʿāmil *and* maʿmūl. *Therefore, his method is undoubtedly unprecedented from the point of view of its coherent application: the principles he follows in illustrating linguistic facts become the guidelines of a new methodology, no one before him had promoted with such a persistence. On the contrary, this statement does not apply to the Kūfan circles where the above-discussed ideas exclusively represent isolated positions related to specific linguistic issues.*

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